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Briefer: Adam Erel, Spokesman

QUESTION: Change of subject. Yesterday, I asked you about the Amnesty International's statements about a Yemeni man.

MR. ERELI: Yeah. I don't have anything for you on it, Saul, because my understanding is that we continue to talk about the same issue, which is -- same issue, which is secret detention centers, and I don't have any comment on those.

QUESTION: Okay. The question is, ignoring the part about secret detentions, they're in custody in Yemen. Are there any -- and people know they're in custody. The Yemeni Government acknowledges that. Are there any U.S. conditions attached to their imprisonment; i.e., have you got some kind of deal with the Yemeni Government?

MR. ERELI: Not that I'm aware of.

QUESTION: Okay. Because that's one thing that Amnesty International asked that you clarify. And the other thing is, can you say where they were detained before they went to --

MR. ERELI: I don't have that -- I don't have that information for you.

QUESTION: Okay. But as you said, this is about secret prisons so why don't I ask you generally about secret prisons.

MR. ERELI: We're going to do that again?

QUESTION: Yes, please. Is it true that Secretary Rice, since the report in *The Washington Post* about the secret prisons, has not made herself available to ask -- answer any questions by the media?

MR. ERELI: What are you talking about?

QUESTION: I'm saying: Has the Secretary answered any questions by the media since that report?

MR. ERELI: Since which report?

QUESTION: Since the report in *The Washington Post* about the secret prisons.

MR. ERELI: Not that I'm -- she's done no public appearances before the media since then.

QUESTION: Is there a connection?

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MR. ERELI: No.

QUESTION: Are you -- she usually comes out, you know, once or twice a week. She's got several visitors today.

MR. ERELI: I think she's coming down today.

QUESTION: Oh, so will she take questions today?

MR. ERELI: The subject is of the International Religious Freedom Report.

QUESTION: Will she take questions from the media?

MR. ERELI: That's not the plan.

QUESTION: That's not the plan?

MR. ERELI: Uh-uh.

QUESTION: Okay. If I could just follow up on that, Adam. I mean, I think Saul is right. We've had, I think, five bilaterals today. All are closed press. It leads one to believe that for some reason the Secretary might be ducking us --

MR. ERELI: I think there's -- let's be clear.

QUESTION: Okay.

MR. ERELI: I mean, this -- if you look at the -- especially when on foreign travel, if you look at the number events and the accessibility of this Secretary to the press, it is -- I'm willing to wager in the short time she's been in this position -- unprecedented in terms of the amount of time she spends with you and the amount of time she talks with you and the efforts that we take in Public Affairs to make the Secretary and senior officials of this Department available.

Now, if you look over the course of the last two days which we're talking about and say you've done nothing to put out senior officials on this issue, I don't think that's a fair point to make, number one.

Number two, what we do in the future, press events in the future, she will be obviously, as always, meeting with different members of the press. But whether we decide to do a big event or a small event, I don't think should be seen as any reflection on accessibility and availability because that -- on that I think the record is clear and compelling. And so I reject categorically any suggestion that we are anything less than available in an unprecedented way.

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QUESTION: Could I follow up on that, please? Okay. Two remarks. One is that were you aware the last time that there was a walk-up news conference with the Secretary and a visiting dignitary --

MR. ERELI: I don't think that's the measure of -- that should not be the measure of availability.

QUESTION: It was July 5th, Adam. It was July 5th.

MR. ERELI: That should not be the measure of availability.

QUESTION: (inaudible) -- if I can ask the question. The question is: Will the Secretary respond to the words that were attributed to her in *The Washington Post* about -

MR. ERELI: I think the response was made by me yesterday and that's sufficient.

QUESTION: Adam, I think, you know, when you lay down that bet, you're probably right. The Secretary has been --

MR. ERELI: Good.

QUESTION: -- has been so accessible that therefore it becomes noteworthy when she suddenly --

MR. ERELI: When there are two days that go by that she doesn't give a public event?

QUESTION: Why are you saying only two days? Why are you saying only two days?

MR. ERELI: Because you're talking about since the report came out. Since the report came out, which was yesterday, and today, you're saying there hasn't been a public --

QUESTION: I think you're wrong there, Adam.

MR. ERELI: No. She said *The Washington Post* report.

QUESTION: I said *The Washington Post*.

MR. ERELI: Yeah. Since *The Washington Post* report.

QUESTION: On the prisons.

QUESTION: On the secret prisons, yeah.

MR. ERELI: Yeah. Yeah, which was yesterday.

QUESTION: No, no. It's --

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QUESTION: One week ago.

MR. ERELI: No, no. This is the report that was in the --

QUESTION: You talked to --

QUESTION: There were two.

QUESTION: You briefed yesterday. We've had the go-around with Sean on this --

MR. ERELI: I thought we were talking about the one yesterday.

QUESTION: -- several times. We've been stonewalled on this about the CIA thing. I think we're talking about at least several days, if not a week. And it's an unusual period for the Secretary not to be available.

MR. ERELI: I think if you look at the schedule, she left -- when did she leave with the President? On Thursday, okay. That's Thursday, got back here Sunday morning -- Monday morning at one o'clock, after traveling with the President on Free Trade of Americas and doing a pretty grueling schedule on an issue of critical importance to the United States, which, as I indicated yesterday, we achieved some notable success on, and then got back at 1:30 in the morning on Monday and had a full schedule of meetings here yesterday and today.

And I don't think it's unreasonable that, given that full schedule and given the travel and given the upcoming travel, which -- where she will also be available, that it's unreasonable to look at that span of time and say that it is fully consistent with her established pattern of -- and the Department's established pattern of speaking to the issue of the day in a forthcoming and forthright way, and we'll continue to do that.

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